

# H-1278-1 – Web Policies and Web Publication Standards

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**A. Purpose and Objectives**

To enhance the management and promotion of electronic Government services and processes ... by establishing a broad framework of measures that require using Internet-based information technology to enhance citizen access to Government information and services, and for other purposes.

E-Government Act of 2002, H.R. 2458

BLM California's web products are designed to empower citizens, our partners, and our employees by giving them what they want – information, work processes, services, and opportunities to be involved in their government. BLM California web products include 1) BLM California's Internet website which serves both our internal and external audiences ([www.ca.blm.gov](http://www.ca.blm.gov)), and 2) BLM California's Intranet website which is available only to BLM employees ([web.ca.blm.gov](http://web.ca.blm.gov)).

This document defines the web policies, operational procedures, management structure, and web publication standards for managing "the web" at BLM in California

**B. Authority**

General authority to issue this order is found in delegations of authority in part 245 of the Department of the Interior Manual (DM). Other authorities include:

1. The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-511, 16 USC 5901-6011), as amended by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (P.L. 104-1344, USC 3501-3520), directs agencies to promote the use of information technology to improve the productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness of agency programs, including improved dissemination of public information.
2. OMB Circular A-130(revised, February 8, 1996) implements the Paperwork Reduction Act by establishing uniform government-wide information resources management policies. It directs agencies to use electronic media and formats, including public networks, to make government information more easily accessible and useful to the public.
3. Executive Order on Federal Information Technology (July 17, 1996), gives agencies the authority and responsibility to make measurable improvements in mission performance and service delivery to the public through the strategic application of information technology.

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4. Executive Order 12862, "Setting Customer Service Standards," September 11, 1993 (31 USC 501, 58 F.E. 48257), establishes customer service standards to guide agency operations.
5. The Child Protection Act of 1984 and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998, requires operators of websites to provide notice to parents about the sites information collection practices and get verifiable parental consent before collecting personal information from children.

**C. Responsibility**

1. State Director

- a. Ensures the web program is carried out within the objectives, policies and procedures established by the Department and BLM Washington offices.

2. Deputy State Director, External Affairs

- a. Oversees the BLM California web program.
- b. Ensures the timely development of policies, procedures, strategies and guidelines, for BLM California's web program.
- c. Designs and approves the "look and feel" of the agency website. Ensures that webpages present a consistent and professional appearance. Works with all offices to provide program information to the public.
- d. Reviews and approves all webpage content prior to publishing to the public web server. Directs updates to materials, as appropriate.
- e. Briefs top executives on BLM California web products and consults with them on how to use the web to achieve their goals.
- f. Manages web marketing and outreach efforts.
- g. Assures policy and technical content is consistent with current Bureau policy guidance.
- h. Leads the California Web Council, conducts bi-monthly conference calls, and provides training opportunities.

3. Deputy State Director, Support Services

- a. Oversees the technical aspects of the BLM California web program. Ensures connectivity to the Internet in accordance with guidelines issued from the Department and BLM Washington Office.

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- b. Maintains server hardware and software including development, maintenance, operation, and security of all BLM IT assets associated with program.
  - c. Provides technical assistance to all BLM-California units, including development of sites, training on web development tools, evaluating technologies, and recommending solutions.
  - d. Develops, justifies, and manages the technical support budget for the web program.
  - e. Appoints a knowledgeable individual to carryout webmaster duties.
4. Division & Field Office Managers
- a. Implements Department, Bureau, and Statewide web policies and procedures within their organization.
  - b. Assures the development and maintenance of relevant, current, and accurate content for web products. Web content provided by Field Offices should be local in nature; web content provided by Divisions should have statewide application.
  - c. Appoints a knowledgeable individual to carry out webmaster duties within their organization to provide direction, guidance, and training to program staff.
  - d. Responds to web generated email.

**D. Policy**

Due to the dynamic and rapidly changing nature of the Internet, these standards and guidelines must be dynamic and subject to change to keep pace with the latest developments in both the technology and the use of this communications medium.

**E. Web Management Structure**

Division and Field Office webmasters are the front-line in web development. At the helm is the State Web Team, which is led by External Affairs with members consisting of External Affairs and Information Resources Management. Each Division and Field Office has a webmaster responsible for implementing statewide web strategies, policies, and procedures within their organization, with the overall guidance and direction of the State Web Team. The Division and Field Office webmasters work with their respective organization heads to create and approve content, manage web-generated email, and

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carry out other web management responsibilities. The State Web Team and the Division and Field Office webmasters make-up the BLM California Web Council.

The BLM California Web Council has six primary roles:

1. Consultant: Consults with managers to help them use the web to improve the way the BLM does business and serves citizens;
2. Editor: Develops and organizes the content of BLM's web products, ensuring that content reflects well on the Bureau;
3. Advocate: Reaches out to audience groups to determine their needs, and act as an advocate to ensure that BLM addresses those needs through the web products;
4. Promoter: Markets BLM's web products among the intended audiences;
5. Train: Trains BLM staff to use the web products in appropriate ways; and
6. Visionary: Anticipates and looks toward the future, analyzing and proposing new ways the Bureau might use the web to carry out its mission more efficiently and effectively.

#### **F. Approvals for New Services, Documents, or Categories**

BLM's web products are supported by appropriated (taxpayer) funds and are to be used for official, mission-related BLM business. Offices that wish to provide new services or new documents/categories over the Internet must submit a proposal to the DSD External Affairs (CA-912) who will coordinate with IRM. Proposals must address the following elements:

Proposed Summary: A brief summary of the proposed internet initiative

Coordination: Identify any relationship to other BLM or Government Internet services. Is this initiative in response to a requirement imposed from outside BLM? Will this service replace any existing on-line or other BLM service or program?

Staff: Identify the person(s) responsible for overseeing the implementation of this initiative, and the person(s) who will prepare the materials and maintain them. Will this person require technical assistance? How much?

Schedule: Identify target dates for completion of this initiative, and any milestones as appropriate.

Resource Requirements: Provide a rough estimate of the amount of information to be stored, whether this service is expected to result in a significant increase in the number of visitors per day, and identify any special requirements/additional resources that are required.

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**G. Clearance Guidelines**

Each Deputy State Director and Field Office Manager ensures that the content of BLM's web products for their organization is current and accurate. Directors and Managers are responsible for establishing and communicating procedures within their organization to ensure that all content submitted to the State Web Team has been properly coordinated and approved.

External Affairs reviews and clears all materials before posted to a web server. This clearance covers the appropriateness of the item, appearance, currency, and accuracy. External Affairs considers the following items when reviewing materials prior to posting on a web server.

*Is this item appropriate for public posting?*

The fact that an item would be provided in response to an FOIA request does not mean that it is appropriate for posting on a public forum such as a website, where it is readily available to persons from all over the world. There should be some legitimate business reason for making it available on our website.

BLM authored and owned information is posted on BLM web servers. Materials and documents prepared by other agencies (such as news releases, reports, and other documents) are not posted on BLM web servers, but may be linked to from the website.

*Is this item current?*

While there are some reports and studies of long-term significance, care should be taken to avoid posting documents which no longer have usefulness, or which contain obsolete references. In the latter case, decide whether to make corrections, or refrain from posting the document.

*Does it contain inappropriate jargon?*

Avoid government jargon and acronyms. Use only terms that the intended audience will understand. Items intended for the general public should avoid jargon altogether. Items intended only for specialized audiences may use some technical terms which are readily understood by that audience. No acronyms should be used in public documents. In internal documents, acronyms cannot be used until the words are first spelled out fully in the article.

*Does it represent the agency well?*

All documents on the website should be professional in appearance and well written. There should be no grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.

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Is the document going to be posted in a way that will make it easy to find and use?










Appropriate format and good navigational tools are vital to the effectiveness of a website. A well-done website can significantly enhance the effectiveness of information by making it easy to find and use.

### H. Web Servers, Software, Tools

All materials on any of BLM's web products must reside on BLM's own servers. In rare cases, the BLM Washington Office may approve an exception to this policy. Exceptions must be granted in writing prior to entering into any new or extended contractual relationship for web server services. A copy of the permission must be sent to the DSD, External Affairs (CA-912). All official BLM webpages – including those that reside on outside servers – must adhere to BLM web policies and web publication standards.

The past few years of modernization and expansion into the XP environment has provided Information Resource Management (IRM) in California sufficient resources (hardware, software, internet access, and technical personnel) to accommodate statewide web hosting needs. BLM California web servers make available a stable and secure environment for the hosting of all California websites. Moreover, IRM in California offers all of the basic services related to the hosting of websites provided by private companies in the web hosting business.

The following web hosting services provided by IRM, are within the context of statewide, agency and departmental policy.

-  Hosting of Intranet, Internet and Extranet sites
-  Firewall protection of internal or sensitive content
-  Nightly backup of web content
-  Assistance with alternative domain names
-  Servers with T1 access to the internet
-  Access control to web content
-  Support for Web to Database Applications
-  Technical Support
-  Secure sites using SSL

1. Interagency/Cooperative Websites. Requests for interagency/cooperative websites shall be made in writing to the DSD, External Affairs (CA-912). Final approval is granted by the DSD, Support Services. A signed Memorandum of Understanding is required for each interagency/cooperative website hosted on BLM California's web server, and it should be attached to the written request.

Division and Field Office managers are responsible for the content of these websites, and updates to the website must be cleared by managers before they are posted to the web server. To ensure these guidelines are met, only requests

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from managers to post webpage updates will be accepted.

The policies and standards contained in this document apply to interagency/cooperative websites. The following disclaimer must be at the top of each entry page:

“The Bureau of Land Management hosts this website as part of an interagency/cooperative agreement. This website may not reflect BLM policy on programs and issues, therefore, BLM provides no warranty, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy, reliability or completeness of the furnished data.”

2. Web Software/Tools. The approved standard for web management and development is Serena Collage and Macromedia Dreamweaver. These toolsets together provide complete lifecycle management that delivers enterprise websites from creation to deployment; provide a centralized data source which can be accessed and shared by all employees in all offices; provide a browser based system; provide workflow control to assure checkpoints, approvals, and link tests are accomplished before going live; and provide features for asset management.

Other approved software programs used with webpage development are Fireworks for images and Adobe Acrobat Professional for Portable Document Format (PDF) documents.

As technology changes, software tools will be updated pursuant to Department and Bureau guidance.

3. Security. Operation of a web server opens up some potential security issues. The state Webmaster has primary responsibility for server(s) security.

4. Domain Names. Domain names will be considered on a case-by-case basis, must demonstrate compelling reasons, and must be approved by the DSD, Support Services and the BLM Washington Office. Submit proposals to the DSD, External Affairs (CA-912).

The U.S. General Services Administration’s “.gov” Internet Domain Registry requires government entities to pay \$125 a year to cover registration and renewal costs.

## **I. Content Guidelines**

All web-based applications (interactive processes, databases, and other online services) must follow web publication standards established by the State Web Team and must adhere to all laws, regulations, and Bureau policies related to privacy and

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security. In addition, applications developed or significantly revised after July 2001 must meet all laws, regulations, and policies related to accessibility.

1. Timeliness and Currency. The credibility of BLM's Internet sites depends on providing information that is up-to-date. Time-sensitive information, such as meeting announcements and press releases, must be posted immediately. Outdated information must be removed or updated promptly.

Whenever possible, electronic documents should be coordinated with release of printed publications so that press releases and other outreach materials can mention electronic availability and include the Uniform Resource Locator (URL). Any document being distributed in both paper and electronic formats must be posted on the web server at the same time the paper document is released to the public.

Press Releases will follow the formal approval process established by the Washington Office, and must be coordinated through the local Public Affairs Officer. Cooperative and partnership press releases may be published on the website after they have gone through the formal process.

2. External Links to Non-BLM Websites. The BLM website provides quality information on its website and discourages visitor “click through” to another site. Although it is good customer service to provide additional information through the use of external links, our main goal is to intrigue visitors to further explore our website. By carefully planning the placement of external links on webpages, this goal is achievable.

As a general rule, there should be no external links from the Bureau's first and second level webpages. Links to other websites must add value and be relevant to the program information on the BLM website. It is not necessary to seek approval of the owner of another website to link to that site. BLM provides links to relevant non-government websites as a public service for our users' information and convenience. The BLM neither endorses the organizations of linked websites and it does not endorse the view they express or the products and services they offer. Nor do we guarantee in any way the accuracy, relevance, timeliness or completeness of the information contained in non-government website links. Links to .gov and .edu websites, and other links approved on a case-by-case basis, must meet the following criteria:


- a. Must be program related and relevant to the subject on the page where the link appears.
- b. Must adhere to the accepted standards of good taste and ethics.
- c. Must not bring discredit to the Bureau.
- d. Must not engage in fund-raising activities, lobbying, advertising, or political activity.
- e. Must not promote specific “for-profit” products or services.

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- f. Must not themselves link to questionable or objectionable sites.

BLM authored and owned information is posted on BLM web servers. Materials and documents prepared by other agencies (such as news releases, reports, and other documents) are not posted on BLM web servers, but may be linked to from the website.

All pages containing links to non-BLM managed sites must include an intercept disclaimer that informs the visitor they are leaving BLM. Authors may use one of the existing three intercept scripts available in Collage for external linking. There are three different scripts to choose from:

-  The **General Script** is appropriate for all external links to non-federal sites:

"You are now Leaving Bureau of Land Management in California. The Bureau of Land Management does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of the materials provided by other agencies or organizations, nor does the BLM endorse other agencies or organizations, their views, products or services."

-  The **Partnership Script** is appropriate for links to BLM partners with which we have a formal established relationship with a written agreement:

"You are now Leaving Bureau of Land Management in California and going to a BLM "Partner" site. The Bureau of Land Management works with a wide array of nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, city, state, federal and tribal entities, as well as the private sector on projects and programs. This link takes you to one of them. The BLM does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of the materials on this site, nor does the BLM endorse the organization, its views, products or services."

-  The **Federal Government Script** is appropriate for links to other Federal Government sites

"You are now Leaving Bureau of Land Management in California and going to another Federal Government site."

3. Disclaimers. All webpages must have links to BLM's disclaimer statement and privacy statements. These are provided in the footer which is pre-set in the standard design in Collage.

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4. Use of Commercial Logos. Commercial logos may be used where we have a formal established relationship, with a written agreement, to work cooperatively on a program or a site. The logo may appear on the website, however, endorsements or references to specific products or services may not appear. This includes sites that are developed for BLM by private contractors.

When plug-ins are required for viewing BLM-hosted content (e.g., Adobe PDF Reader, Real Audio Player) authors are reminded that the use of commercial logos is not permitted.

The BLM Washington Office issued guidance that websites fall under the publication approval process, and subject to the policies and procedures of the printing program. The following link to “Government Printing and Binding Regulations” published by the U.S. Congressional Joint Committee on Printing provides guidance and policy on using commercial logos.

Government Printing and Binding Regulations (see page 13)  
<http://web.ca.blm.gov/exaffairs/printing/design/epregs.pdf>

5. Videos, Photos, and Graphics

- a. Videos and photos taken by BLM employees, at BLM events, or official photos of BLM officials may be published on BLM web. Photos taken at events other than official BLM events require the written permission of the individuals in the photos before publication.

Videos, photos, graphics, maps, reports, and other materials prepared by BLM employees, volunteers, and contractors on behalf of the Bureau can not be copyrighted and may be used on BLM websites.

Photos and graphics from other sources (private citizens, newspapers, books, non-government organizations, other websites, etc.) require written permission before publication. For more information, see “.6 Copyrighted Materials.”

- b. Children’s Photos/Privacy. The Children’s Online Privacy and Protection Act of October 1998 puts parents in control over what information is collected from their children online. Photos of children under the age of 18 may be used on the website, however, parental permission must be documented in writing and on file in the local office. In most cases, the first name and age is the only identifiable information that should be used in order to protect the child’s privacy (do not use city, name of school, or last name when using first name and age).



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If using group photos of children, try to use photos with the children facing away from the camera, and/or get up-close shots of children's hands working on a project. Photo captions should say something like "Mrs. Smith's 5<sup>th</sup> grade class plants trees in the ABC nature area." Do not mention the school or the city.

Do not collect information from any child under the age of 18 without the parent's consent. A link to the Kid's Privacy must clearly be stated on all pages where the Bureau accepts feedback and comments from the public.

6. Document Formats. A major part of the BLM's web products consist of documents being distributed electronically to supplement paper distribution, or in lieu of paper copies. Posting these documents in an appropriate format is important for insuring maximum usability of Bureau Internet offerings.

Various document formats are available. In general:

-  Shorter documents for review on the computer screen using a web browser should be prepared in Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) using Dreamweaver.
-  Portable Document Format (PDF) documents are well suited for: (1) documents that will NOT be modified by the users, (2) documents that should look identical to the printed document, and (3) documents that will be redistributed electronically after downloading. This format is well-suited for documents which are too long to be easily viewed using a HTML browser.

Often, a combination of these formats will be appropriate to insure maximum access to electronic documents.

7. Webpage Standards. The purpose of webpages is to convey information. Structuring them effectively is the most important consideration in their development. All of the accepted standards of effective written communication also apply to webpages (a point frequently overlooked). Webpages should be conversational in tone, and concise. Information should be presented from the customer's point of view. Avoid government terminology, acronyms, and references to particular program titles, unless (1) you have explained them adequately, or (2) the limited audience for that page can be expected to be fully familiar with these terms.

When used properly, hypertext links can greatly enhance the communication of information through this medium. An effective Webpage is NOT just a translation of a paper document into an HTML page. When creating Webpages, concentrate on creating short pages and think three dimensionally. Webpages

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are not read linearly. Hypertext links allow visitors to rapidly access the information that they need. A hypertext link to an explanation of a term allows the person who is not already familiar with the term to learn more about it, while the person who is familiar with it can move on without being slowed down by excess verbage.

People are unlikely to read long involved sentences or paragraphs on a Webpage. Simplify, simplify, simplify! Moving on to someplace more interesting takes only a mouse click, so give them the information they need up-front, or they won't stick around to find it.

Elements such as colorful icons can make a page more attractive and interesting, but use with restraint. The Bureau's job is to convey information effectively, and anything that distracts from that goal should be avoided.



- a. Presenting a Unified Picture. It is important that BLM's collective web products offer each user full access to the entire expanse of the distributed collection, regardless of the point at which the user enters the system. Reaching the goal of providing the convenience of "one-stop shopping" in a widely distributed system will require that each document collection sponsored by BLM, in addition to serving its own particular constituency, provides links to other BLM collections.

Field office homepages should provide links to other BLM on-line services. As appropriate, this may be accomplished through a single link to the BLM California homepage. However, lower-level links between specifically related programs in other BLM units may sometimes be appropriate.

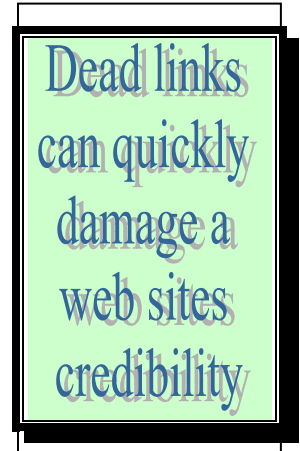
- b. Navigational Aids. Documents should be designed to minimize users' reliance on the navigational aids in web browsers (e.g., back and forward buttons, history lists). The back button, particularly, tends to retrace a path through each page the user has visited rather than logically backing out of a collection. Therefore, it is often useful to provide links that move logically forward and backward through a document as well as to the table of contents or index.

Include a link on each page within a document or collection back to the homepage for that document or collection. Each major collection homepage must in turn include a link back to the BLM homepage. There are ways to do this "intelligently" with web development tools, so that as pages are added or removed, the navigational aids are updated appropriately.

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c. Hypertext Link Maintenance. Dead links inevitably occur on web servers as pages are modified, moved, or deleted. However, dead links can quickly damage a website's credibility. Content providers are responsible for monitoring and maintaining their webpages. They should correct or remove dead links as soon as possible.

When changing URLs on web products, coordination may be required with external servers which point to those URLs. When moving a webpage to a new URL, leave a forwarding page providing directions to the new location. Accuracy is critical - check the syntax of any newly posted webpages and verify all links.

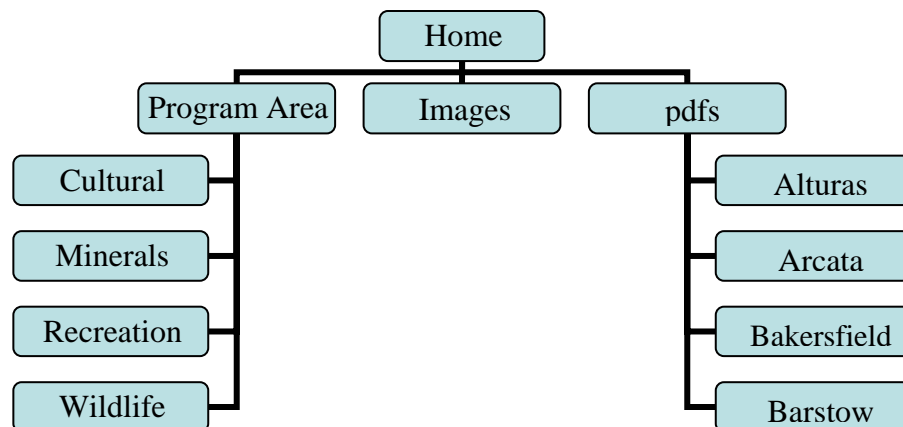


d. Restricted Access. Documents that are not public (i.e., not yet published, not fully marked up or tested, internal working notes, etc.) should not be "linked to" from publicly accessible documents or placed on public web servers. BLM maintains an internal website for this purpose.

### 8. Webpage Layout and Design

a. Directory Structure. The default name for a home page in a collection of pages is "index.html." When a web browser is given the URL to the directory, it will look for and open the file named "index.html."

The Directory Structure is organized by program areas, then by field offices. Content providers, depending on their area of expertise, will update pages in the program area directories.



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Each Field Office has a directory for office specific (non-program) webpages, i.e., home (index.html), second level pages, and more.

All images should be placed in the "images" directory. This includes the BLM seal, numerous small icons such as bullets and horizontal lines, and photos.

All pdf documents should be stored in the "pdfs" directory, and placed in the appropriate field office or program area directories. These include planning and environmental documents that are available in pdf format.

b. Site Design. Bureau Website Design guidelines, WO IM No. 98-95, sets policy on the placement of the logo, office name, address, phone number, navigation bars, links to disclaimers, updated dates, and more. These items have been pre-set using "master borders" and "site structure" elements in Collage. Authors only need to develop the content for the webpage.

c. Title. The title is displayed in the title bar of the browser. If a user elects to save the address for future use, the title identifies the page in user's "favorites" or "bookmarks" list. In addition, titles are used by search engines to identify the page.

Every page must have a title. The title should be short, but fully informative and specific (e.g., "FY 1997 CA-BLM Budget" instead of "Budget"). The information in the title will be used by various Internet search engines to index webpages.

d. Keywords. Additional terms for use by search engines can be added to the heading area of webpages using the meta keywords tag as follows:

```
<meta name="keywords" content="Bureau of Land Management,  
natural resources, wilderness, oil, gas, Federal">
```

The commas are ignored by the indexing engine, but can be used for clarity when producing the list.

e. Description. Some search engines pick up the first 250 or so words on a webpage and use these as a description of the page. This is often quite useless. Add a "description" meta tag to the header of the webpage for use by search engines:

```
<meta name="description" content="Information, including a  
registration form, for the BLM sponsored Advisory Council on  
Recreation Fees, which will be held April 25 through 26 in Barstow,  
California.">
```

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A description is appropriate on homepages, but is not necessary or appropriate on every page.

f. Opening. Each webpage should have a heading near the top of the first screen that clearly identifies the theme of the page. Like the title, the heading should be short, but informative and specific. Lower-level headings may also be used if appropriate to the document.

g. Use of the BLM Emblem. The BLM Emblem must appear at the top of every major BLM webpage. This has already been set in the site design.

h. Body. Paragraphs within the body of a document should be clear and concise. Make paragraphs short, and use bullet lists in lieu of run-together listings within the text. Where the audience has a mixed knowledge of the subject you are addressing, it is often desirable to hyperlink explanatory verbiage to a glossary, footnotes, and external documents to provide additional information to less informed and more curious readers. Other effective uses of hyperlinks include graphics, tables, surveys, and indexes.

Care should be taken to separate and emphasize content within a page. Horizontal rules <HR> can be used to separate themes within a page. Overuse of italics and bold can make text difficult to read.

i. Footers. All webpages must have a footer that is separate from the body and contains navigational links that allow the user to move logically through the website. They must also contain office name and address, date webpage was last updated, and links to the disclaimer and privacy policy. Standard footers are pre-set in the site's design.

j. Document Organization. Large documents (greater than five or ten screens) presented as webpages should be broken out by sections or chapters and saved as smaller files. If the material is meant to be read primarily sequentially, then a Table of Contents at the top of the page with hyperlinks to each chapter is most appropriate. If the material is meant to be picked through, then key word links to appropriate sections may be best.

The use of links to major sections within the same webpage is done by creating "Anchors" at each of the sections. Then the Table of Contents is linked to the appropriate section or anchor. For example, "Introduction" in the Table of Contents is linked to the section of the document that begins the Introduction.

k. Use of "Relative" Links. Within a server, use relative links (or internal links) for both anchors and images. Relative links start with the current









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directory and show the path to the new directory and the name of a file in that directory. Two dots ("..") means to go up one directory in the directory tree. Relative links do NOT start with a slash.

Links that reference other servers (external links) should always be fully stated (absolute) and begin with "http."

All links to images or multimedia files, or other files the user might expect to be large, should be followed by an indication of the size of that file in parenthesis or brackets, i.e. (78K). Even if the file is small, provide the size as the user may be reluctant to select it in order to avoid a file that is large and may take too long to download.

I. Images. The appropriate use of images helps convey information or create a consistent and recognizable "look and feel" for a collection, as well as to convey meaningful information that is not easily conveyed by words. When using images:

-  Make image files as small as possible.
-  Use thumbnail images or text to link to pages with large images.
-  Reduce the number of colors in graphics. Color graphics will seldom need more than 256 colors, and will sometimes be adequate with 16 colors. Black and white images should be saved as 2 color image files.
-  Use an appropriate image format. Generally, image files of 256 colors or more will be smaller as JPEG images, while black and white images are better as GIF images (also, GIF is required for transparent images).
-  Images should be no wider than 472 pixels in order to display on the typical Web browser's 500 pixel wide viewing window on a 640 by 480 monitor.
-  Where possible, limit the number of images to less than three per page, and keep the total size of the images to less than 15 Kbytes.
-  Provide a brief alternative text description for each image for use by text-only browsers (Section 508 Accessibility requirement).
-  Specify the width and height of each image. This will speed-up document formatting on many browsers.

## H-1278-1 – Web Policies and Web Publication Standards

**Webpage Layout, Content, and Design Checklist**

- ☐ The content of a page is related to the Bureau's function and mission
- ☐ Documents and webpages have been reviewed and approved by field office manager or DSD prior to deploying to the public web server
- ☐ Content is accurate and up-to-date
- ☐ A spelling and grammar check has been completed electronically and visually
- ☐ Page has a "Title" and a header which describes the theme of the page
- ☐ External links have been checked and verified, and are program related
- ☐ External links have the "You are leaving BLM..." script
- ☐ Meta data is complete
- ☐ Government jargon and acronyms have been avoided or explained
- ☐ Long pages are separated into glossaries, indexes, footnotes, external documents, and tables of content
- ☐ A text equivalent for non-text elements (for example, graphics and images) is provided via "alt" or "longdesc" tags
- ☐ Images are not wider than 472 pixels and are around 10k in file size
- ☐ The width and height of each image is specified
- ☐ Multimedia presentations have text transcripts synchronized with the presentation
- ☐ Row and Column headers are identified for each data table



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9. Accessibility. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires the Federal government to ensure that its electronic and information technology is accessible to persons with disabilities (29 U.S.C. 794d). Some of the requirements include the following:

- a. Every graphic image must have a text equivalent. Graphics, photos, and other images must be described by text boxes. Audio and video must include synchronized captioning. Maps, charts, and graphs must have text descriptions.
- b. If color is used for navigation, to give text emphasis, or to convey meaning, there must be a text alternative for those who cannot recognize the color.
- c. Do not use flashing or blinking text, objects, or other elements.
- d. Electronic forms must be accessible to people using adaptive/assistive technologies.
- e. When image maps are used, there must be an alternate text-based method of selecting the options.


A complete list of requirements and procedures for making webpages accessible is available from the General Services Administration, "Writing Accessible HTML Documents" <http://www.gsa.gov/coca/WWWcode.htm>

Other resources include:

-  Design of HTML Pages to Increase Their Accessibility to Users with Disabilities, Trace R&D Center, University of Wisconsin - Madison (<http://www.trace.wisc.edu/HTMLgide/>)
-  DOI Accessible Technology Center ([www.doi.gov/atc/s508.html](http://www.doi.gov/atc/s508.html))

## H-1278-1 – Web Policies and Web Publication Standards

**Section 508 Check List**

Requirement	
1. Does each non-text element on the page have a text equivalent via “alt” (alternative text attribute) or does the page otherwise include a meaningful description of the non-text element in the text accompanying the non-text element?	
2. For any multimedia content, is text captioning provided for all audible output and audible output provided for all important visual information?	
3. Are all audio descriptions and text captions synchronized with their associated dynamic content?	
4. Is the page capable of being understood and navigated even if users do not have the ability to identify specific colors or differentiate between colors?	
5. If the page uses cascading style sheets or JavaScript style sheets, is it viewable without style sheets or with style sheets turned off or not supported by the browser?	
6. If the page uses cascading style sheets or JavaScript style sheets, is it designed so that it does not interfere with style sheets set by the browser?	
7. If the page includes a client-side image map, does each map region have a text equivalent via “alt” (alternative text attribute) or does the page otherwise include a meaningful description of the non-text element in the text accompanying it?	
8. If the page includes data in tables and if the table has two or more rows (including header or data cells) does each cell provide identification of row and column headers?	
9. If the page uses frames, does each frame have a title that meaningfully describes it?	

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Requirement	
10. Does the page include content (such as applets or content requiring plug-ins) that may cause the screen to flicker with a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz?	
11. If the page uses scripts, such as JavaScript or scripts in Macromedia Flash content, and if the scripts affect any content displayed to the user, is there equivalent text provided by the page or the script that is accessible to a screen reader?	
12. If the page uses applets, such as downloadable Java applets, does it also contain the same information and functionality in an accessible format?	
13. If the page uses other programmatic objects such as Flash, Shockwave, RealAudio, or RealVideo content, or otherwise requires the use of plug-ins or programmatic support for the browser, does the page include a link to the plug-in or programmatic item required for accessing the content of the page and is that plug-in or programmatic item itself accessible to people with disabilities?	
14. If the page links to .pdf (Adobe Acrobat's portable document format) files, where those .pdf files created in a way that is likely to maximize their usability for people with disabilities?	
15. If the page includes one or more electronic forms that is designed for completion online, does each form permit users of assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form including all directions and cues?	
16. If the page contains one or more forms that is designed to be completed online but that is inaccessible to people with disabilities in some respect, does the page include an alternative accessible form or a link to an alternate accessible form?	
17. If the page includes navigational links to other webpages within the same website, is there a link allowing users of screen readers to skip over those links?	
18. If the page requires users to respond within a fixed amount of time before the user is "timed out," is the user alerted that he or she will be timed out and given sufficient time to indicate that more time is required before actually being timed out?	

## J. Copyrighted Materials

A copyright is the 'rights' of an author or publisher to the 'copy' (text of an article, photo, art work, music) which that author or publisher produced. This has come to mean the right of intellectual property whereby authors obtain, for a limited time, certain exclusive rights to their work.

In the United States, copyright protections are exclusively granted under federal law, which derive from Article 1, Section 8, Clause 8 of the Constitution and provides Congress with the power "to promote science and the useful arts, by securing for a limited times to authors ...the exclusive right to their...writings."

In the United States, and most other countries, a work is copyrighted automatically upon creation. No notice is required, nor is registration required with a government agency.

Works that do not enjoy copyright privileges are considered to be in the public domain. Common examples of public domain works are:

- ❏ Works for which the copyright has expired. Expiration of a copyright depends on a number of criteria. A copyright can run from 28 to 100 years.
- ❏ Works of the U.S. Government. These works cannot be copyrighted. However, works that have been created for the government may have some copyright protection from commercial use.
- ❏ Non-copyrightable works such as titles, names, short phrases and slogans. (However, these may be eligible for trademark protection.)
- ❏ Works for which the copyright has been forfeited or abandoned. The most common form of copyright forfeiture is the lack of specific copyright notice on materials published before March 1, 1988. (After that date posting of notice was no longer required to effect a copyright.) Abandonment requires specific language and intent to place copyrighted works in the public domain by the author.

1. Obtaining Permission to use Copyright Materials. Field offices using materials (videos, photos, text, maps, music, etc.) from a source outside the BLM must obtain permission to use them on a website. Permission must be obtained in writing and must be specific. For example, if permission is granted to use material on the website and in a printed document, the permission must so state. In some cases, the Bureau might receive permission to use in a printed document, but NOT on the web. On other occasions, the Bureau might obtain a ONE TIME USE of a photo or other material (i.e., in one publication only). Be sure to document (in writing) and comply with the Bureau's authorization!

- a. Keep the original authorization on file in the local office.
- b. Send a cc (fax or hard copy) to the State Office CA-912
- c. Provide authorization/credit on all instances of use.

US Code Title 17: Copyrights <http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/index.html>

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2. "Fair Use" of a Copyrighted Work. Copyrighted Works can be "fairly used" without fear of copyright infringement for such purposes as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, or research. Whether the use of a work is fair is determined by balancing these factors:

- The purpose and character of the use;
- The nature of the copyrighted work;
- The amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the work as a whole; and,
- The effect of the use on the potential market for, or value of, the copyrighted work.

3. Incorporating Copyrighted Works into Web Documents. The Internet contains a mix of works protected by copyright and works in the public domain. Thus, extreme caution should be exercised in using digital material downloaded from the Internet. Access to works on the Internet does not automatically mean that they can be reproduced and reused without permission or royalty.

Proper credit should be given for all copyright material. When in doubt, credit should be given as if the material was copyrighted.

If there is a possibility that an Internet product will become part of a commercial product in the future or become widely disseminated, then permissions should be sought before publication of the product.

If any alterations are made to copyrighted material, care should be taken to explain the specific changes.

## **K. Web Generated Email**

Email generated by BLM's web products must be answered promptly, using email whenever possible. Normally, web-generated email should be answered within two business days. If a reply requires more research, the webmaster or designee should send an interim reply to the requestor within two business days. Final responses should be sent within two weeks. In rare cases, if the response requires more than two weeks to prepare, the Bureau should notify the requester and offer a date by which the final response will be sent.

If a webmaster or designee receives an email which could be answered more effectively by another organization or office, he/she should forward the email to the appropriate manager immediately, either copying the requester or sending an interim reply to the requestor notifying him/her that the message has been forwarded.

Employees are accountable for prompt, courteous, and appropriate responses to web-generated email, via performance standards. Responses must reflect BLM's strong commitment to good customer service.

## **L. Volunteers and Electronic Systems**

The Bureau is presented with many opportunities to use volunteer labor with electronic systems such as updating websites, maintaining and updating databases, e-mail, etc. Since such actions directly impact the Bureau's network and policies established for access behind the firewall, it is essential that offices adhere to the following guidance to maintain a secure environment.

Volunteers may have access to BLM's computer systems from inside the firewall (from a BLM office) by completing a "New User Request Form." To obtain the New User Request Form, send an e-mail message to the California Help Desk. Volunteers working on Bureau computer systems must work with and coordinate closely with the local program lead and/or webmaster.

Managers are responsible for the accuracy and relevancy of content completed by volunteers. Managers should ensure that each volunteer complete the following on-line courses:

DOI IT Security Training <http://www.doi.gov/training/itsecurity/>  
Managing Records Responsibly <http://www.ntc.blm.gov/courses/1200-05.html>

Based on Departmental guidance, volunteers shall not have access to BLM's electronic systems from outside the firewall through either dial-up or VPN access.

## **M. Contract Web Services**

Third party contractors must adhere to Departmental and Bureau policies and publication standards for the web.

## **N. Use of Cookies**

The use of "continuous" or "persistent" cookies – software that collects personal information for the purpose of providing customized information/systems to individuals – must have approval from the BLM Director, through the Assistant Director, Information Resources Management/COI. In order to obtain approval, submit a request demonstrating clear and compelling need for the use of cookies to the State Director. If approval is granted, the manager must ensure that a notice is posted in a conspicuous place on each page that uses continuous cookies explaining how the information will be used and how it will be safeguarded. Approval must be granted and a copy of the approval must be sent to the State Web Team before the technology is implemented.

The use of "session cookies" – cookies that do not retain personal information beyond a single session – are permissible. Any interactive applications provided via the web must address all applicable requirements of the Privacy Act.